

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5444

S E C R E T PEKING 0633

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR VN

SUBJECT: US RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM

REF: STATE 073536

1. ROMANIAN POLITICAL COUNSELOR PANAIT LEFTER CALLED ON ACTING CHIEF MORNING OF APRIL 8. DURING CONVERSATION OF ABOUT ONE HOUR, LEFTER DISCUSSED A NUMBER OF TOPICS OF CURRENT INTEREST BUT REAL PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT WAS EVIDENTLY TO DELIVER A MESSAGE ON VIETNAM.

2. LEFTER SAID THAT THE ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR TO HANOI, AN OLD FRIEND, HAS RECENTLY TRANSITED PEKING. THE AMBASSADOR HAD SAID THAT HE WAS IMPRESSED BY THE DESIRE OF PEOPLE HIGH IN THE DRV AND THE LAO DONG PARTY FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. WHEN ASKED AT WHAT LEVEL THIS INTEREST HAD BEEN EXPRESSED, LEFTER SAID THAT IT WAS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, LE DUAN HIMSELF, BUT THAT THE DESIRE FOR IMPROVEMENT WAS NOT CONFINED TO HIM.

3. LEFTER SAID THAT THE DRV WAS RAPIDLY RECOVERING FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE WAR, AND, IN A REALISTIC REVIEW OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY, HAD DECIDED IT NEEDED TO EXPAND ITS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS TO MORE COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES. THE DRV HAD RATHER SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN ITS RELATIONS WITH CHINA (PARTICULARLY THE TERRITORIAL PROBLEM OF THE

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PARACELS AND SPRATLYS), LESS SERIOUS (UNSPECIFIED)

PROBLEMS WITH THE USSR, AND WANTED TO BALANCE ITS FOREIGN POLICY BETTER BY RELATIONS WITH THE US. LEFTER SAID THAT WHILE THE DRV WAS INTERESTED IN THE ECONOMIC ASPECT OF RELATIONS WITH THE US, THE POLITICAL ASPECTS WERE AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT.

4. LEFTER ADDED THAT THE DRV WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS THE MIA PROBLEM WITH THE US. IT HAS INFORMATION ON SOME, BUT NOT ALL, OF THE MIA, BUT ANY DISCUSSIONS MUST BE IN THE CONTEXT OF BROADER TALKS ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES, INCLUDING PROMISES MADE BY FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON.

5. LEFTER CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT HE FELT THE VIETNAM REALLY NEEDED RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, MUCH AS ROMANIA DID. ACTING CHIEF REPLIED THAT WHAT LEFTER HAD SAID WAS MOST INTERESTING, AND SAID THAT HE WOULD REPORT IT TO WASHINGTON.

6. COMMENT: WE HAVE NOT HEARD OF THE ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE DRV TRANSITING PEKING RECENTLY, BUT WE ORDINARILY WOULD NOT IN ANY CASE. WE ARE MYSTIFIED AS TO WHY AN APPROACH ON US-DRV RELATIONS WAS MADE IN PEKING, UNLESS THE ROMANIANS ARE MAKING SIMILAR APPROACHES ELSEWHERE.
THOMAS

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